



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **BRAZILIANS CONVICTED FOR PRODUCING AND DISTRIBUTING FRAUDULENT IDENTITY DOCUMENTS**

WORCESTER, MASS. —A pair of Brazilian nationals pleaded guilty Friday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> in federal court to charges relating to the making and selling of false social security cards and alien registration cards, more commonly known as “green cards.”

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan; Robin M. Avers, Special Agent-in-Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and Gary Gemme, Chief of the Worcester Police Department, announced today that Frank Machado Da Silva, age 26, formerly residing at 20 Imperial Road, Worcester, and Valdina Aries Santos 44, formerly residing at 23 Hermans Street, Worcester, both natives and citizens of Brazil, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge F. Dennis Saylor, IV. Specifically, Da Silva pleaded guilty to five counts of transferring false United States identification documents and one count of possessing false United States Identification documents.

At Friday’s plea hearing, the prosecutor told the Court that, had the case proceeded to trial, the Government’s evidence would have proven that in Aug. 2004, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) special agents, acting on a tip, began an undercover operation, dubbed “Operation Fastpass,” to purchase false social security cards and false green cards being made in the Metrowest and Worcester County areas of Massachusetts.

From Aug. 2004 through Dec. 2004, ICE special agents were able to purchase 50 phony green cards and 50 phony social security cards from Santos and Da Silva. Santos acted as the broker and negotiated to sell the phony documents in exchange for \$65 per document. Da Silva made the phony documents with equipment in his apartment which was located in Worcester, Massachusetts. On Dec. 8, 2004, both defendants were arrested, and after waiving their rights, both defendants admitted to their involvement in the scheme. Agents seized the document making equipment from Da Silva’s apartment.

“ICE places a high priority on investigating document fraud and identity fraud cases,” said ICE special agent-in-charge Avers. “ICE is committed to closing down the systems and enterprises that compromise the security of our nation by targeting the people, money and materials that support illicit networks.”

Judge Saylor scheduled sentencing for Da Silva on April 29, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. Santos is scheduled to be sentenced on May 2, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. Both defendants face up to 15 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Both defendants also face possible deportation to their native Brazil following the completion of any term of imprisonment imposed by the Court.

The investigation was conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, with the assistance of the Worcester Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Casey in Sullivan's Worcester Office.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*